

unemployment rate of 8 percent. Extension of unemployment benefits is critical for many Oregonians who are in jeopardy of running out of benefits if they are not extended before the end of the year. In order to ensure unemployed workers in Oregon and many other states will not be left without benefits, I am objecting to unanimous consent on S. 1896 or H.R. 1664, unless extension of unemployment benefits and reform of a lookback rule that affects Oregon and other high unemployment states is included as part of the legislation.

REPEALING THE MEDICARE PHYSICIAN FEE CUT

Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina. Mr. President, I express my support for repealing the Medicare physician fee cut. The issue of reimbursements for physicians who treat Medicare patients has been an ongoing battle. Currently, these reimbursements are inadequate and inefficiently paid through a bureaucratic system. Some physicians have been even forced to refuse Medicare recipients due to these inappropriate reimbursement levels. With so many Medicare recipients who need medical services in South Carolina, the situation with low reimbursements poses a challenge to both physicians and patients.

I have supported updating and increasing the reimbursements physicians receive under the Medicare program. The schedule of fee cuts for these reimbursements has been temporarily suspended due to the actions of Congress. I supported legislation to repeal physician fee cuts for both fiscal year 2002 and 2003. However, in October 2003, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, reported that the physician fee cut for 2004 would be 4.5 percent. This necessitates a further repeal to ensure this fee cut does not move forward.

While annual repeals of the physician fee cuts are vital, I also support a substantive change to the reimbursement calculations so physicians are not held in limbo each year regarding their fee updates. I am hopeful that Congress will address this issue in a comprehensive manner.

Since I support legislative action to make sure this cut is repealed and to ensure future repeals are dealt with effectively, I am exceedingly concerned that the most current repeal in the Medicare physician fee cut is contained within the mammoth Medicare prescription drug bill. This blocks me voting solely on the merit of the repeal.

I have many reasons as to why I plan to oppose the Medicare prescription drug bill conference report. None of my reasons are concerns with the Medicare physician fee cut repeal. Rather, my opposition stems from the lack of real cost containment of the program, exclusion of true Medicare reform, the weakening of the premium support issue, the treatment of "dual eligibles"

coverage, and other issues related to oncology drugs, durable medical equipment, DME, and local pharmacies.

It frustrates me that this latest repeal is in a bill with literally dozens of other Medicare provisions in a \$400 billion dollar bill. While I cannot support the Medicare prescription drug bill, I will continue to support the repeal of next year's Medicare physician fee cut and addressing the ongoing issue of fee cuts in a comprehensive manner. I am hopeful that our leadership will give us a vehicle for a straight up or down vote on this issue.

A TRIBUTE TO RALPH BUNCHE

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, it is difficult to know exactly how to pay tribute to Ralph J. Bunche for his extraordinary contributions to scholarship, diplomacy, civil rights, social justice and international cooperation and development. The Senate has approved H. Con. Res 71, "Recognizing the importance of Ralph Bunche as one of the great leaders of the United States . . . The year-long centennial commemoration of his birth, which is now well underway, involves many more professional societies, educational institutions and public-policy organizations than it is possible to list; among them are the American Political Science Association, the Association of Black American Ambassadors, the American Library Association, the Council on Foreign Relations, Facing History and Ourselves, national foundation, the NAACP, the National Urban League, the New York Public Library, numerous United Nations Associations and dozens of colleges and universities in this country and abroad. At UCLA, Ralph Bunche's alma mater, the African American Studies center has been renamed in his honor. I am especially pleased to note that the American Academy of Diplomacy has chosen to honor Ralph Bunche by sponsoring the two-year Philip Merrill Fellowship for the two-year M.A. program at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University.

Among his many accomplishments, Ralph Bunche received the first doctoral degree in government and international relations ever awarded by Harvard University, thereby earning the title "Dr. Bunche." But Benjamin Rivlin, who is Co-Chair of the Ralph Bunche Centenary Committee, has told us that he was specifically instructed to "cut out this doctor business" when as a young soldier he was assigned to work for Ralph Bunche in the OSS sixty years ago.

The vast array of tributes now being paid to Ralph Bunche reflects just how extraordinary a person he was. Born in Detroit and orphaned at eleven, he went to live with his grandmother, Lucy Johnson, in what is today the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles.

By all accounts, Lucy Johnson was as extraordinary as her illustrious grand-

son. Writing in the Reader's Digest many years after her death, Dr. Bunche called her "My Most Unforgettable Character . . . Caucasian 'on the outside' and 'all black fervor inside.'" One of his teachers said of her, "I have never forgotten the emanation of power from that tiny figure." Ms. Johnson's remark to the principal of Jefferson High School, where Dr. Johnson was valedictorian of his class and a varsity athlete, is especially memorable. In a disastrously misguided effort at flattery, the principal is reported to have said, "We never thought of Ralph as a Negro," to which Ms. Johnson replied: "Why haven't you thought of him as a Negro? He is a Negro and he is proud of it. So am I."

From his grandmother Ralph Bunche learned the fundamental lessons of self-respect and respect for others. He also took from her a passion for education. It was she who insisted that he go to UCLA, where he majored in international relations and was valedictorian of the Class of 1927. Upon his graduation from UCLA, Bunche received a fellowship for graduate study in political science at Harvard. Shortly after enrolling he received what was to be his grandmother's last letter. Writing just a week before her death, she asked, "Will you finish at Harvard this year?"

Ralph Bunche did indeed receive his Master's degree at the end of that year, but he did much more. In the small African American community at Harvard at that time he made lifelong friendships with, among others, the future Judge William Hastie and the future cabinet member Robert Weaver. He completed his Ph.D. in 1934, receiving the government department's annual award for the best dissertation. And while working toward his degree he also taught at Howard University—America's "black Athens"—where he helped organize the political science department at a time when, according to Kenneth Clark, the distinguished psychologist who was a student at the time, "the seeds of a legal and constitutional attack on racial segregation were being sown in the intellectual soil of Howard University."

Although bent on an academic career, Ralph Bunche postponed research in South Africa to work closely with Gunnar Myrdal on Myrdal's historic and highly influential study of race in this country, "An American Dilemma." With the outbreak of World War II he was brought into the newly-established OSS for his expertise on Africa, and in 1944 he moved on to the State Department. The following year he served as an advisor to the American delegation at the San Francisco Conference, where the Charter establishing the United Nations was signed, and in 1946 he joined the U.N. Secretariat, where he remained until shortly before his death. As Brian Urquhart, who first went to work for Ralph Bunche in the U.N. Secretariat in 1954, later observed, "Public service had